

*A Profession of Faith, argu'd from the
Priesthood of CHRIST.*

I N A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at a
Meeting of Ministers

A T
I P S W I C H,
June the 20th, 1739.

By *J O S E P H P I T T S,*
Of Braintree in Essex.

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A PROCEEDING OF THE
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

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AS
BY THE

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Seeing then that we have a great High-Priest, that is past into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our Profession.

ONE great Design of the Apostle in this Epistle, is to convince the *Hebrews*, or *Jews*, that they would be very far from being Losers, by renouncing *Judaism*, and embracing *Christianity*. And this he proves, even to a Demonstration, by comparing the *High-Priests* under the Law, with the *Apostle and High-Priest of our Profession* Jesus Christ; and every impartial Person must allow that the latter ought in all things to have the Pre-eminence. He would have them consider him; *that he was accounted worthy of infinitely more honour than even Moses*, of whom they boasted, and in whom they were so ready to trust. What was *Aaron*, or any of his Descendants, when compar'd with the *Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God*: And since this is the Case, surely we ought, as we are exhorted in the Text, *to hold fast our Profession*. In the Words we have,

1.) A very particular Description of our glorious Redeemer. He is describ'd by one of his Offices, *a great High-Priest*. The Place where he now is, *that is past into the Heavens*.

His lovely, and most endearing Name, *Jesus*. And the near relation he stands in to the Father, *Son of God*.

2.) We have a necessary Duty press'd upon us from this Consideration, *let us hold fast our Profession*. The Confession of our Faith, or that Profession which we have made of believing in *Jesus*, and our Resolution of continuing attach'd to his Interest. This we are to retain, hold fast with all our might, as the Original Word κρατῶμεν signifies.

DOCTRINE. The Consideration of our having such a High-Priest, as the *Lord Jesus Christ*, should be an Encouragement to us to hold fast our Profession.

In discoursing on this Proposition, I shall endeavour, thro' Divine Assistance, to pursue the following Method. (1.) Show what we are to understand by the Profession here spoken of, and which it is our Duty, and will be our Interest to hold fast. (2.) Explain the Duty recommended in the Text, or enquire what is included in our holding this fast. (3.) Consider the Force of the Argument which the *Apostle* makes use of. (4.) And lastly, the Application.

(1.) I am to shew what we are to understand by the Profession spoken of in the Text. It is *Confession* in the Original, τῆς ὁμολογίας. So that it may be meant of a *Confession of Faith*, which all, who call themselves Followers of *Jesus*, should be ready to make, and never depart from: Or a Profession of the *Christian*

stian Religion; an Adherence to the *Gospel* of *Christ*, which none ever had the least Reason to be asham'd of. The *Doctrines* which are reveal'd there, and which we ought to believe, and express a becoming Concern for; and the *Duties* which it recommends, and we are bound to pay a constant Regard to. I am always for joining these two, and where Ministers leave out *either*, and only insist on *one* of them, they can with no Propriety be said to *Acts xx. declare the whole Counsel of God*. So that the ^{27.} Profession here includes in it, 1.) The Doctrine of *Christ*, and 2.) Our Subjection to him.

1.) The Doctrine of *Christ*. The Doctrine concerning him, which was deliver'd either by himself, or by those *holy Men of God, who spake, and writ as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*.

Ministers shou'd be very careful never to *preach themselves*, but always *Christ Jesus the* ^{2 Cor. iv.} *Lord*. He shou'd be the constant Subject of ^{5.} our Ministry, and what more delightful Theme can be insisted on? What other Subject can we reasonably hope will be attended with Success? More particularly,

1st, The Doctrine which relates to his Person, as *God-Man*, and *the only Mediator between God and Man*.

2dly, The Doctrine of *Christ's Offices*, as *Prophet, Priest, and King*.

3dly, Other *Gospel Truths* necessarily flowing from, and dependant on these.

1.) The

1.) The Doctrine which relates to his Person, as *God-Man*, and *the only Mediator between God and Man*. And this is not a mere speculative Point, as some would fain persuade us, but *the very Foundation* of our Religion ; if we part with the true, and proper *Divinity* of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, what shall we have left worth contending for ?

Joh. i. 14. That there are two Natures in the Person of our Redeemer, the *Divine*, and *Humane*, we believe, because we are expressly told in Scripture, that *the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt amongst us*, and that *God was manifested in the Flesh*, but we do not pretend to account for the *Modus* or *Manner* in which they are united *. We are not ashamed to own that there are *incomprehensible Mysteries* in Religion, which we notwithstanding receive, because reveal'd in the *Word of God* ; and this before us in particular, the Apostle *Paul* himself tells us
1 Tim. iii. 16, is a *great Mystery*.

How many are there, in the present evil Day, who say they will believe nothing but what they can account for by *their own Reason*, and therefore seldom speak of *Mysteries* in Religion but with a *Sneer* ? But how easy wou'd it be to make it appear, that these *Pretenders* to Reason are very inconsistent with themselves ? They cry up *Natural Religion*, in opposition to *Reveal'd* ; but are there no *Mysteries* in *Natural Religion* ? Why don't they

* See *Hurrian's Knowledge of Christ crucified*, p. 54, 94, 111.

they tell us how the Soul and Body are united? Why don't they explain the *Eternity* of God, his *Immensify*, and other *divine Attributes*, which are infinite? Are these *less incomprehensible*, than those *Gospel Doctrines* which they make so very free with †? Why shou'd *Inexplicables* be admitted in one Case, and not in another? But the Doctrine of the *Glorious Person of Christ*, as *God-Man*, is too precious for Believers to be *laugh'd out of*. They know if they were to part with *this*, they must at the same time give up all their Hopes, and sit down in Despair.

2.) The Doctrine of *Christ's Offices*, as *Prophet*, *Priest*, and *King*. These 'tis necessary for us to be in some measure acquainted with, for in every one of them he must be accepted by us, in order to Salvation. - Thus is he offer'd in the *Gospel*, and thus is he *receiv'd* by all who believe in him; and we are assur'd that *those* Mark xvi. 16. *who believe not, shall be damn'd*.

There is no one *Office of Christ* which can be dispensed with, we want him as a *Prophet*, to instruct us by his *Word*, and by his *Spirit*, and *none teacheth like him*. Happy all who are his Scholars, what Improvement do they make in useful and saving Knowledge? We can't do without such a *Priest as Christ*; who but he could procure a Pardon for us, as well as all other needful Blessings? Who else could be our *Advocate with the Father*, and plead our Cause

† See Dr. Ridgley's Body of Divinity, Vol. 1. p. 103, &c.

Psal. cx. 3. Cause at God's Right Hand above? And then we stand in absolute need of him as a King, to rule in us, to *make us willing in the day of his Power*, as well as defend us against our Enemies; restrain their Rage and Malice now, and make us *more than Conquerors* over them all at last.

3.) Other Gospel-Truths necessarily flowing from, and dependant on these: Thus, for instance, the *Necessity of a Satisfaction to divine Justice* for God's People's Sins. There is an *infinite Evil* in Sin, and if God cou'd have pardon'd it without a Satisfaction, I mean an *adequate or infinite Satisfaction*, consistently with the Glory of the *divine Perfections*; I can't but think he would have *spar'd his own Son*, and not deliver'd him up to Death for such as we are.

Rom. viii. 32.

Again, the *Sufficiency of Christ's Satisfaction*, his Death, was a *proper Sacrifice*; and there was Merit enough in his Sufferings, to atone for the Sins of all those whose Surety he was, and for whose Offences he was deliver'd, his Blood was *the Blood of God*.

Acts xx. 28.

Further, the *Prevalency of his Intercession*, what Interest he hath in the Court of Heaven, that the Father bears him always; and all they whose Cause he undertakes, are secure for Eternity. They shall have Grace, and more Grace while in this World, and thereby be fitted for Glory in that which is to come.

In short, 'tis a Profession of all the great, and important Doctrines of the Gospel; the free Grace

Grace of God in Christ, to poor lost Sinners. The *distinguishing Love of God*: that the *Father* shou'd choose, and the *Son* redeem any of the fallen Race of *Adam*, when all had sinned, or he knew wou'd sin, and come short of his ^{Rom. iii. 23.} *Glory*: And that the *Holy Spirit* shou'd work effectually upon every one of these, and enable them to hold out unto the end, till they get to that *Glory and Happiness* which they were appointed to, and has been purchas'd and prepared for them: The *Doctrine of Justification* by *Christ's imputed Righteousness*: These, and the like *Truths* are reveal'd in *Scripture*, therefore ought to be *believ'd with the Heart, confess'd with the Mouth*, and I can't but think, on proper occasions also, *subscribed with the* ^{Isa. xliv. 5.} *Hand*.

2.) By the *Profession* in the Text, we may understand our Subjection to *Christ*, which we shou'd be ready to profess and own. We have given up our selves to him, and whose shou'd we be but his? He is our *Lord*, therefore we must *worship*, and *serve him*. He is our *King*, and we his *Subjects*, consequently ought to be govern'd by his *Laws*, which are all *holy, just, and good*. He hath *redeem'd us to God by his Blood*, purchas'd our Persons, *bought us with a Price*; surely then we ought to *glorify him*, ^{1 Cor. vi. 20.} *both in our Bodies, and in our Spirits, which are his*. We are bound to do whatever he commands us, and to walk in all his *Ordinances*.

I proceed to the second Thing proposed, which is to inquire what is included in our *holding fast* this Profession. And,

1st, It supposes that we shall meet with Opposition; many will attempt to make us let go our hold.

2^{dly}, I think it necessary to observe, that we can't hold fast our *Profession* by any Power of our own.

3^{dly}, We should desire to be more firmly established in our Belief of Gospel-Doctrines, that we may be *rooted and grounded in the Truth*.

4^{thly}, We should resolve in *Christ's Strength* not to *apostatize* from the *Profession* we have made, how great soever the Hazard we are exposed to for our *faithfulness* may be.

5^{thly}, That we will not part with one *important Doctrine* of the Gospel upon any *Consideration* whatever, no not for the sake of *Peace*.

6^{thly}, And Lastly, It includes in it a *contending earnestly for the Faith* once delivered to the Saints, and an expressing a becoming Zeal and Concern whenever we are called to it.

1st, It supposes we shall meet with Opposition, many will attempt to make us let go our hold. This hath been the Lot of God's People in all Ages, and therefore when 'tis the case, we must not think *any new thing hath happened to us*. Satan will do what he can to weaken our hands, I mean as far as God thinks fit to permit him, many discouragements will he throw in our way, and suggest such

Difficulties to our Minds, as if left to our selves, we should never be able to get over. What a *subtile* Enemy is this *old Serpent*? fain would he persuade us to doubt of those things, which he cannot but believe himself. He knows many *Doctrines* to be *true*, concerning which he endeavours to make us *stagger thro' Unbelief*.

Again, we must expect to be attack'd by the *Men of the World*. Those who are *after the Flesh*, are so contrary in their very Nature, to such as are *after the Spirit*, that they hate and despise them. How often will they threaten those they have any influence over? and as soon as *God* lets them loose a little, and gives them leave, they persecute them with the greatest Fury, even to Imprisonment and Death. What Reproaches do they cast upon *God's* People who are faithful to him, stick at nothing to *blacken* their Characters, and ruin their Reputation. But I think the *Testimony of a good Conscience* may make such Burdens sit very easy upon us.

Further, when *Menaces* will not do, they have another Experiment to make, in which it must be own'd, they have too often succeeded. Many who could bear a *Frown*, have been seduc'd by *Smiles* and *Flatteries*.

We might add, that we shall find no small Opposition to the Truth as it is in *Jesus* from our own *evil Hearts of Unbelief*. How ready are these to join with our other Enemies against

us, and whenever they have an Opportunity betray us into their hands?

Gal. iv.
16.

2dly, I think it necessary to observe that we cannot hold fast our *Profession* by any *Power of our own*. The *Impotence* of Man, since the *Fall*, to any thing that is spiritually good, can't be too often insisted on. I know 'tis very disagreeable to *Men of corrupt Minds*, they don't love to hear of their *Weakness*, tho' so very apparent. But must not *Ministers* therefore speak the *Truth*? Yes, tho' they were sure Sinners would reckon them their Enemies for telling it them. We must not *court*, and *flatter* Persons to their Destruction. Such as do, will have the *Blood* of those poor Souls, *required at their hands*. We must tell Persons what they are by *Nature*, whether they will hear, or no.

Rom. v. 6.

Why don't these People, who cry up the *Liberty of Man's Will*, and the natural Abilities which he hath to do whatever *God* requires, give more frequent *Proofs* of this their *Power*? What *mighty things* do they do, and wherein do they excel others, who are sensible of their want of it? It is true, when we came first out of *God's* hands, we had Strength sufficient to yield a *perfect Obedience*, but we soon lost all our spiritual Power by *Adam's Fall*, and became *weak*, yea *dead* as to *divine Things*, *we were without Strength when Christ died for us*.

2 Cor. iii.
5.

The *Apostle*, I take it for granted, could do as much as any of these *self-sufficient Persons*,
and

and yet what *low* Thoughts and *mean* Opinion had he of himself? So will all who are made Partakers of the same *Grace* that he was. *Not that we are sufficient of our selves*, says he, *to think any thing*, &c.

We can easily enough think *evil* Thoughts, *these* will arise in our Minds without any help; but 'tis not so as to what is *good*, as *Believers* very well know, and daily mourn for it before God. But if this *Authority* should not be thought sufficient, behold *a greater than Paul is here*, let *Christ* himself determine the Matter: *Without me*, i. e. whilst separate, or at a distance from me, *you can do nothing*. Union ^{John xv.} with *Christ* is necessary to our doing any thing ^{5.} which will be acceptable to God; but this cannot be where *Faith* is wanting; and till this Principle is implanted, we are *dead in Trespases and Sins*.

Let me apply my self to *Believers*, who are the *best Judges* as to things of *this* nature. Pray what *Ability* had you to do any spiritually good Action, till you were *quicken'd* by *Grace*? Nay, had you the least *Inclination* to it whilst unregenerate? Shou'd you ever have *wrought out your own Salvation*, with *Fear* ^{Phil. ii.} and *Trembling*, if God *had not work'd in you* ^{12, 13.} both to *will*, and to *do*? Were you not naturally destitute of *holy Desires*? And when you had them, were they not *created* in you by the *Holy Spirit*? Have you any thing but what you have *received*? And if you are better than others,

others, did you make your selves so? I am sure you will say, *by the Grace of God we are what we are*, and 'tis this alone that made the Difference.

1 Cor. xv.
10.

Nay, I'll go a little farther, since you have been made alive, don't you find constant need of *fresh Supplies*? Would not *Grace* lie dormant, if you were not to receive more out of *Christ's Fulness*? Or should you continue *following* and *running* after *Christ*, if he did not continue to *draw* you? It is *God* must incline to, fit for, assist in, and carry through every good Work.

Cant. i. 4.

3dly, We should desire to be more firmly establish'd in our Belief of *Gospel Doctrines*, that we may be *rooted, and grounded in the Truth*. Many will endeavour to draw us into *pernicious Errors*; and if we are not well establish'd in the *Truth*, we shall be in danger of *turning aside to lying Fables*. It is a good thing that *the Heart be establish'd with Grace*: and we shou'd study *important Truths* more, consult *Scripture*, and try the Arguments brought to confirm them thereby, and if they will not bear this *Test*, they are not conclusive. And if we did ~~not~~ but more diligently *search the Scriptures*, we should see the *Beauty, Harmony, and Agreement of Gospel-Truths*, how closely they are connected with and depend upon one another. *Scripture-Knowledge* we shall find the most *useful*, as well as *entertaining*.

Eph. iii.
17.

4thly, We

4thly, We should resolve in *Christ's Strength*, not to *apostatize* from the *Profession* we have made, how great soever the Hazard we are exposed to for our *Faithfulness*, may be. Before we engage to follow *Christ*, and become his *Disciples* and *Servants*, we should sit down, and count the Cost. Difficulties are what we are to expect in our *christian* Race, and Warfare ; but we must determine, come what will, we will not *desert* our *Colours*, but remain *true* and *faithful* to our *General*, under whose *Banner* we have listed ourselves. When we have given our *Word* to *Christ*, we must not think of going, ^{Luke ix. 62.} or so much as *looking back*, but move on where-ever our *Captain* orders, and leads us.

Not that such *Resolutions* are to be made in *our own Strength* ; all that are, will assuredly be broken ; but in *Christ's Strength* we may vow ^{2 Cor. xii. 9.} and shall perform, his *Grace* is sufficient for us. Nor should our own *Weakness* discourage, or drive us into *Despair*, when we consider his *Strength*, this may banish all our Fears. When this *rests upon us*, what is there we cannot do ? What *Duty* can't we then perform ? What *Burden* can't we bear ? What *Enemy* shall we not be a *Match* for ? Shall we not then be able to grapple with, and overcome the most potent of them all ? We have a Promise of *suitable Supplies* of Strength, while we are running the *Race*, that we shall hold out to the *End*, and then *receive the Prize*, viz. a *Crown of Glory*. Is not *Christ* able to protect us ? And will he

he not, when we are true and faithful to him? None ever repented of being so. What Harm can our Enemies do us, when we are in the Hollow of his Hand, and surrounded with the *Almighty Power of God?*

5thly, That we will not part with *one important Doctrine* of the *Gospel* upon *any Consideration* whatsoever, no not for the sake of *Peace*. We should remember the unspeakable Value of *Gospel Truths*. Our Lord hath left them with us as a *sacred Depositum*, which we should therefore be very careful to preserve, and transmit *uncorrupted* to our *Posterity*.

Rom. xii.
18.

I grant, we are, *if possible, to live peaceably with all Men*. But if in order thereto we should give up any of those *Doctrines*, which are the *Foundation* of the *Christian's* Hope and Comfort, how could we look *Christ* in the face another day? *Peace* is very desirable upon a *good Footing*. God forbid those, who are *most zealous* for the *Doctrines of free Grace*, should delight in War, meerly for Contention's sake; but *what Communion can Light have with Darkness, or what Fellowship* he that believes *with an Infidel*? If we can't have *Peace* but at the Cost of *Truth*, it would be too *dearly purchas'd*, and a perpetual Reflection upon those who conclude it on such *base, and dishonourable Terms*.

6thly, and Lastly, It includes in it a *contending earnestly for the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints*, and an expressing a becoming Zeal, and Concern, whenever we are call'd to it. We

are

are to contend, when the great *Doctrines* of the *Jude 3.* *Gospel* are the Matter in Dispute, and earnestly too. We shou'd be zealous for the *Glory* of *God*, and the *Honour* of our *Redeemer*, and more concern'd for it, than even for our own *Reputation*. This we may safely leave in his Hands, if we are faithful to him, he'll take care of that.

Not that we are to use *Fire* and *Faggot*, or any such violent Methods, as the *Papists* do; these are very odd sort of *Arguments*; the Fear of them may make Persons *Hypocrites*, but not true *Profelytes* to any Religion whatsoever; it may make them *speak*, but not *think* as we do. Compulsion is not the Way to work upon the *Mind*; indeed the Will cannot be forc'd.

No, nor are we to call for *Fire from Heaven*, upon those that differ from us, even in the most essential Points of *Christianity*, we might then justly expect a sharp Rebuke from the meek *Jesus*, and it wou'd be very evident that we did not know what manner of Spirit we are of. But as we have Opportunity, we are to lay before them the *Danger* of those *Errors* they have fallen into, and endeavour to convince them by *rational* and *scriptural Arguments*; and especially pray to *God* for them, to open their *Eyes*, and turn them from *Darkness* to *Light*. Which argues most *Charity*, to let a Person go on *blindfold* to *Hell*, or to tell him where he is, what his present Course must end in, and therefore

Luke ix.
55.

therefore warn him to *flee from the Wrath to come* * ?

Ver. 56.

The Son of Man came not to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them ; and surely 'tis greater Love to their Souls, to do what we can to recover them from those *Notions*, which have prov'd fatal to so many, than be any way necessary to their eternal Destruction. A Zeal for the *Truths* of God, and a Concern for the Souls of our Fellow-Creatures are very consistent ; and I fear where the *former* is wanting, there will be but very little of the latter. 'Tis one thing to *talk of* Charity, and another to *practise* it.

Let us now pass on to the Third Thing, to consider *the force of the Argument* which the *Apostle* makes use of in the Text : *Seeing then* that we have a great High-Priest that is passed into the Heavens, *Jesus* the Son of God. And

Heb. ii.
17.

1.) If we are true Believers, *Christ* is our High-Priest, *we have* him ; and he *knows* all our Wants, and Difficulties, yea hath a *fellow-feeling* with us. There is no *Trial* we are exercised with, nor any *Burden* we labour under, but he knows it altogether, and *he is both merciful, and faithful*. Our very Groanings are not hid from him, for he *knows all things*. And when we are oppress'd and harass'd for his sake, will he not have Compassion on us ? Will he not help us under all, and *succour* and *deliver us when we are tempted*. He hath promised to be

* See Bradbury's Mystery of Godliness, p. 87.

be with his People *always to the End of the World*, and he is *faithful and true*.

And which is more still, he stands in the Relation of an *Head* to us. All who believe are *Members of Christ's Body*, and therefore he can't but be affected with what they feel; when they suffer, he may be said to suffer with them, *in all their Afflictions he is afflicted*. Little did Saul think what he was doing, when he *breath'd out Threatnings and Slaughters against the Church*, and was persecuting those who call'd upon *Christ's Name*. He foolishly imagin'd he was doing God service, by murdering his faithful Servants, and without all doubt expected to be rewarded for his *blind, and bloody Zeal*. But how great was his Surprise, and what a Consternation was he in, when he heard that *Voice from Heaven, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Acts ix. Christ was then in *Heaven*, and yet look'd upon 4. *Ec.* himself as persecuted, because his *Members* here upon *Earth* were.

2.) He is a great *High Priest*. Absolutely consider'd, and comparatively. Great in himself He is indeed, as to his *divine Nature*, over all Rom. ix. God *blessed for ever*, so that it must be infinite 5. Condescension in him to become our *High Priest*. How low did he humble himself for our Good? though he is *Man*, yet let us never forget that he is *God* too.

And if we compare him with the *High Priests* under the *Law*, how much greater, and more glorious doth he appear to be, in

every respect whatsoever? What was the *High Priest* then, tho' array'd in all his holy Garments, which, it is true, were *made for Glory, and for Beauty*, in comparison of *Christ*, who sits upon a *Throne of Glory*, at the *Father's Right Hand in Heaven*? We may say, he had no Glory in this respect, by reason of *Christ's* Glory, which so much excels.

Heb. vii. 11. Again, *Christ* was not made a *Priest* after the Order of Aaron, but after a much more noble Order, viz. that of *Melchisedec*. They were all but *Types of Christ*, *Figures of him that was to come*, and through them had *Believers* then an Eye to the *Messias*, who was to be a *Priest*, as well as a *Prophet*, and a *King*.

John iii. 34. They had the Spirit by *Measure*, only to such or such a Degree, being anointed with Oil; but *Christ* was anointed with the *Holy Spirit*, whom the Father gave not by *Measure* to him.

Heb. vii. 24. They were many, for they cou'd not long continue in their Office by reason of Death; but there is no Succession in *Christ's Priesthood*, He is but one, his *Priesthood* is unchangeable.

Once more, They were Sinners, and were oblig'd to offer Sacrifice for their own Sins, as well as for the Errors of the People. They were compass'd with Infirmary, and subject to like Passions with others; but our *High Priest* was perfectly holy, harmless, and undefiled. It was for our Sins, not his own, that he offer'd him-

himself a Sacrifice; so that he may well be call'd a great *High-Priest*, and our having v. 26, 27. such a one, should encourage us to hold fast our Profession.

But then further, 3) He is said to be *pass'd into the Heavens*, διελθὼν τὰς οὐρανούς, that has pass'd through the *Heavens*, the *aerial*, or *visible* Heavens, and enter'd into the *third* or *highest* Heaven. He was once upon *Earth*, but when he had finished the Work he came about, he return'd to *God*, and his *Father*. Now, from this it is evident that he had fully satisfied for his People's Sins. If *Justice* had not receiv'd an *adequate* Satisfaction, *Christ* wou'd not have rose from the Dead. Death wou'd have had Dominion over him, and he wou'd have been still confin'd in the Grave. Or if he had risen again, he cou'd not have ascended into Heaven; the Gate wou'd have been for ever shut against him, or at least he cou'd not have entred thither as *his People's Forerunner*, and *Head*, which we are sure he Heb. vi. did. He ascended as a *publick* Person, but 20. *God the Father* wou'd not have admitted him as *such*, if the Damage which his *Law* and *Justice* had sustain'd by their Sins, had not been fully repair'd. The Honour of the Divine Perfections must be secured.

And as he is in *Heaven*, it is plain he must be out of the Reach of all his Enemies. He hath indeed obtain'd a compleat Victory over them, *led Captivity Captive*, and drag'd them at his Chariot Wheels. Fur-

Further, by entering into *Heaven* he hath open'd a *way* for his *People* thither. If he had not *enter'd*, we must never have expected *Entrance*. He went to *Heaven* to *prepare a Place* for us, and hath taken Possession of the *purchased Inheritance* in our *Name*. And shall we not then hold fast our *Profession*?

Heb. vii.
25.

4.) His *very Name* may serve as a further Argument to induce us hereto: *Jesus*, a Saviour, a compleat Saviour, *able to save to the uttermost the chiefest of Sinners, and always*. He can save us from all *Evil*, every Thing hurtful, and put us into possession of all *Good*, or make us perfectly happy, and that for ever. He can save us from *Sin*, and give us *Grace*, and Holiness. He doth not save any in their *Sins*, they who expect this will be greatly disappointed. They must be very ignorant, to say no worse of them, who make *Christ the Minister of Sin*, as if he wou'd encourage those *Works of the Devil*, which he came into the World on purpose to *destroy*. He saves from the Guilt of *Sin*, this He washes away, and cleanses his People from by his own *Blood*, and there is no *Sin*, tho' of never so deep a dye, tho' attended with never so many heinous Aggravations, but this *Blood of Christ*, if apply'd to it, will make it become *as white as Snow*. Nor shall *Sin* reign in their Hearts, as it did before Regeneration, this *Christ* will not suffer; no, he will set up his own *Throne* there, and by his *Spirit*, and *Grace*, which he gives to them, make them a *People* prepared for the *Lord*.
Again,

1 John iii.
8.

Again, *Christ* is able to save them from *Satan*, rescue them out of his hands, and translate them from his Power, and Tyranny, into the Kingdom of *God*. They shall not be *Satan's* Vassals, but *Christ's* own Subjects: From *Wrath*, and the condemning Sentence of the *Law*, which all are by Nature under, and reconcile them to *God*. *God* will not be their *Enemy*, but their *Father*, deal with them as *Children*, and never turn them out of Favour.

Christ will save them from *Death*, and give them *eternal Life*. They are pass'd from *spiritual* Death, to *spiritual* Life already, *temporal* Death can't hurt 'em, because its Sting is gone; nor are they in any danger of *eternal* Death, (for he hath purchased Life everlasting for them.) In short, He will save them from *Hell*, which their Sins have deserv'd, as well as others, and bring them to *Heaven*, which is *the* Rom. vi. 23.
free Gift of God thro' him.

5thly and Lastly, He is *the Son of God*. As concerning the *Flesh*, he is the Son of *Man*, or rather *the Seed of the Woman*, for his Mother was a *Virgin*; but we do not conceive aright of his *Glorious* Person, if we don't view him as the *Son of God* too, the *only Begotten of the Father*, of the same Nature, and *equal with God*. And Phil. ii. 6.
if so, *God* can't but be always well pleas'd with him, and we may be assur'd will grant him whatever he desires. No Petition presented by *Christ* ever was, shall, or indeed can be rejected.

And

And then, how many gracious *Promises* hath he made to encourage us in our *Profession*? these are all *yea, and amen*. I grant, if he were *no more* than a Man, he might *lye*, or if he were *only* the Son of Man, he might *repent*, and how very *precarious* would our Salvation then be? Nay, I will venture to say, our everlasting Destruction would be *inevitable*. But if *Scripture* be true, (and if *God's Word* may not be depended upon, we have nothing sure to trust in;) Well, if *Scripture* be true, we may safely build upon *Christ*, and rest on his *Word*, for he is the *true*, as well as *mighty God*, and *eternal Life is in him*. He hath said *his Grace is sufficient for us*, bid us *be faithful to Death*, and promised that he will *give us a Crown of Life*; if we *confess* him before *Men*, he will *confess* us before *God*, and introduce us into his, and our *Father's* more immediate Presence, where we shall be inconceivably Happy to all Eternity.

r John v.
20.

(4.) and Lastly, The Application.

1.) No wonder they who are ignorant of *Christ*, are very little concern'd about what *Religion* they profess. It is really shocking to consider what *Ignorance* is to be met with, in many Parts, even of our own Land. Multitudes seem to know as little of *God*, and *Christ*, as the very *Heathens*, and how easy is it to persuade such to be of *any Opinion*? their *Religion* is yet to choose. Oh that *God* wou'd send forth

forth more of his *Light*, and *Truth*, and pour down his *Spirit* upon them.

2.) Such as have no Interest in *Christ* as a *High Priest*, will not hold fast their *Profession* in a Time of *Difficulty*, and *Danger*. While the Sun shines, many are *zealous* for *Religion*; but if the Clouds gather, and Storms and Tempests arise, their Hearts soon fail, and they dare proceed no further. If Times of *Persecution* were to return, such as some of you can remember, 'tis to be fear'd the *Number* of *Professors* wou'd sensibly decrease, and *many*, who appear *forward* now, would *draw back* then, and walk no more with the true Followers of the *Lamb*. I hope *God* will not try us *this way*; the *distant* Thought of it, I suppose, makes some of you at times tremble, but let not such Thoughts terrify you, we don't know what we can do, or suffer, till call'd to it, because we don't know what *Strength* we may, at such Seasons, have given in to us, we may expect suffering *Graces* in suffering *Times*. If we have an Interest in *Christ*, (which we may be sure we have if we *believe* in him, and *love* him in *Sincerity*,) we shall be secure, let the Occurrences of *Providence* be what they will. *God* will fit us for his Will, and when we have done all our *Work*, receive us to *Glory*.

3.) Never more need surely to press this *Exhortation* than *now*. Doth not our Lot seem to be cast in, what we may call, the very *Dregs* of Time? May we not write *Ichabod* upon

D

our

our Land? Oh how much is *the Glory departed* from us! what is become of that *Spirit* which our *Forefathers* were so renowned for? that *Zeal* for the *Glory of God*? that ardent *Love* to *Christ*, and one another? that strict *Justice* in their Dealings? that *close walking with God*? that *holy Observation* of the *Lord's Day*, in the conscientious Discharge of publick, private, and secret Duties? Did not too much of this excellent Spirit die with them?

How many who had a *religious Education*, were brought up by their godly *Parents*, in the *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, who had many *Prayers* sent up for them, and many *Tears* wept over them, are asham'd of their *Fathers* God, and the Guide of their Youth? have turn'd their Backs upon *Religion*, and make a *Fest* of every Thing truly serious? What Lengths have such *poor Wretches* as these run? How sad doth their Case seem to be? While they were Young, or their Parents alive, they were under some *Restraints*, but now they take what Liberties they think fit, and run to *all manner of excess of Riot*. Time was perhaps when they were under *Convictions*, the *Holy Spirit* mov'd upon them, *Conscience* wou'd not let them go on *quietly* in Sin, but they have wounded *Conscience*, and grieved the *Holy Spirit*, quench'd his *Motions*, and boast that they have got the better of their Fears. *Conscience* is fear'd, and the *Holy Spirit* ceases to strive with them, for the present however,
and

and who can tell whether he will ever return to them again? Many such have undoubtedly been *judicially* blinded, and harden'd, and then nothing does any good upon them. However, 'tis not for us to pronounce Persons State *desperate*; we are to pray, and hope, for *God* can instantly change the hardest Heart, and turn the most obstinate, disobedient Sinners, to the *Wisdom of the Just*.

Again, how many, from whom better things might have been expected, are gone off from the *good old Doctrines*, or the *Truths of the Gospel*, and *banter* and *ridicule* even those which are of the greatest *Importance*? What *Contempt* do some cast upon those *Doctrines*, which are the *Glory* of our *Religion*, as well as the *Foundation* of all the *Christian's Hope*, and the *Spring* of all his *Comfort*, and *Joy*? don't they endeavour to rob *Christ* of his *Divinity*? and the *holy Spirit* of *that*, and even his *Personality* too? what *Reproach* do they load his *gracious Assistance*, and *saving Operations* with? as if they were nothing but the *Effects* of *Enthusiasm*, and none but *weak* and *ignorant People* pleas'd themselves with the *Thoughts* of them. *They* know nothing of them, therefore *none* do. A close way of arguing indeed! worthy such *Patrons*, and *Advocates* of *Reason*. *They are no doubt the Men, and Wisdom* Job xii. 2. *will die with 'em*, but *who* are the *wisest Persons* will appear to all the *World* another *Day*.

And then, others who durst not go so far as *openly to deny*, and *oppose* the *Doctrines*, do notwithstanding give up the *Importance* of them, and act as if they thought it a Matter of *indifference* whether they are believ'd or no, and that they are not worth contending for*. What a *Handle* this hath been, and what *encouragement* it hath given to the *Enemies* of *Christianity*, is now well known. Some were long since told how it wou'd be, and now find it too true, which I believe will make them appear with a more fervent *Zeal* for a *Redeemer's* Glory, on any *future Occasion*.

2 Pet. ii.
1. Further, how many *false Teachers* are gone out into our World, and our Churches too? Do not many *lie in wait to deceive*? But this is no more than was foretold, and is it not a loud Call to *Watchfulness*? Let us *try* the *Spirits*, the *Conversations* as well as *Doctrines* of such, and we shall soon see how contrary their Spirit is to that of *Love, Fear*, and a *sound Mind*. We shall find upon Examination, that their *Conversation* is very far from being *as becomes the Gospel*, and how should it be agreeable to what they have so little Veneration for? And if we bring their *Doctrines* to the only infallible Touchstone, *viz. the Word of God*, they will appear to be *Diametrically* opposite to the whole Tenour of *Scripture*.

Let us diligently guard against the first *Appearances*,

* See Dr. Knight's Sermons at Lady Moyer's Lectures, p. 292, &c.

pearances, or *springings* of *Error*, and nip them in the Bud ; such evil, noxious *Weeds* grow a-pace, if not prevented : and what confusion hath follow'd in many *religious Societies*, when some of their Number have *departed from the Faith*, and have not been *dealt* with according to *Gospel-Rule* ! How many *flourishing Churches* have by this means had their *Peace* and *Love* destroy'd, been broke in pieces, and the Interest in a little Time come to nothing ?

4.) What abundant encouragement have *Believers* to hold fast their *Profession* ? *Christ* is *on our side*, what then can either *Men*, or even *Devils* do against us ? He is infinitely stronger than them all. It is *his Cause* we are engaged in, and we need not doubt but He will take care of us. He hath promised *to be with us*, *to help*, *strengthen*, and *uphold* us while here, and *to confess* us before his Father and the *holy Angels* hereafter. Whereas such as *deny Him*, he will then *deny*, be *asham'd* of them, tell them *he never knew*, i. e. approv'd of them, and bid them *depart from him*, because they Matt. x. 32, 33. *have been Workers of Iniquity*.

Though *Friends* shou'd be displeased with us, blame us for our Conduct, and because we proceed in that Cause, grow *cold*, and *frown*, *Christ* will *smile* upon us, and how little will their *Anger* affect us then ? They may *forsake* us, but *Christ* never will ; and if we have his *gracious*, and *comforting Presence*, what can we desire more ? This made *Paul* and *Silas*

I sing

Acts vi.
25. *sing Praises to God at Midnight, when thrust into the inner Prison, and their Feet were made fast in the Stocks; and many others to rejoice at the sight of the Stake, and in the midst of Flames.*

Eph. iv.
14. 5.) and Lastly, Wou'd we be *stedfast*, and *immoveable*? Let us labour after an *Experimental* Acquaintance with God, even the Father, and Christ. This will keep us firm, and steady, when others, who are *Strangers* to the *Power of Godliness*, will be like *Children* *toss'd to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine*, through the *cunning Craftiness of Men*. If we are *united to Christ by Faith*, there will be no Danger of our ever being *separated* from him. He will not lose one, no not the meanest, or weakest of his Members. Then we may be sure *Christ is ours, God is ours*, and consequently all is ours. All the *divine Perfections* are engag'd on our side, and all the *Promises of the Covenant of Grace* belong to us. Let us then hold fast the *Profession* of our Faith without wavering, for *he is faithful who hath promised*, to whom be Glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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